

## THE THEATER IN NEW YORK

Daly Gives "Know Thyself"—"The City" Is the Last of the Fitch Plays—"The Lily" Well Received.

New York, Dec. 31.

Those numerous folk who have a scornful much to say about "mere photography" in the theater might retire a little less curly of the lip if they had suffered the premieres of a certain December 27, 1909. In the afternoon Arnold Daly produced Paul Hervieu's "Connais-toi," put into English by Algonon Boyesen, but I suspect some school of languages. Even in moments of the tensest anxiety, the most overwhelming passion, the persons talked in careful, elaborate, elegantly rounded phrases. They conversed like editorials chopped up into dialogue—and not much chopped at that. There is no excuse for casting a drama into such stilted terms, but there is a reason. Hervieu, academical and honored litterateur, belongs to that small school of French dramatists who write for the Comedie Francaise and the Odeon, and who appear to think the whole dramatic structure would collapse if they once let themselves down to nature.

This "Know Thyself" presents two of those familiar French trigrams instead of one. Where they cross and clash and make the big noise. When a martinet of a general surprises his cousin's wife stealing from a bachelor's apartments he advises that cousin to the sternest course. But when he learns that the seducer was, in fact, his son, and furthermore that the man suspected is really the lover of his own youthful second wife, the old gentleman is considerably cut up. He reels off some of the grandest language ever penned. We—the style editorial seems necessary—would like to know what French-English dictionary Mr. Boyesen uses. A testimonial from him would be invaluable to the publishers.

## Last Play of Clyde Fitch.

A viciously crazed young man shoots to death a girl he married an hour ago, and tries to kill himself; but her brother discovers the murder; a desperate fight ensues for the pistol, and the wretch is saved from suicide to await lawful punishment for his crime. There are sufficient reasons, of course, why that violent physical encounter, which ordinarily might not move spectators much, makes an emotional and intellectual masterpiece of "The City." The news that a posthumous play by Clyde Fitch was not a comedy with women dominant, but a tragedy with men for remarkably potent factors, was not exaggerated in the telegraph dispatches.

Fitch lived many years in very costly luxury from the proceeds of his light and not trivial work. Nothing that he wrote was other than ephemeral. I know that he held some of it in contempt. He seemed more mercenary than worthily ambitious. However, when he had accumulated a fortune sufficient to richly endow himself and his parents for the rest of their lives, he decided to write a big, broad drama of deadly passions. He died within a month after its completion. He left other and usual manuscripts, but his wisely affectionate mother has decided that none of them shall be acted, because she wishes the last memory of him to rest on his only wholly serious composition.

Would you like to fully comprehend how Fitch made "The City" psychological and metaphysical with a murder and an attempt at suicide? Then read this paragraph twice if I don't write it so that once renders the subject too obvious. George Rand comes to New York with an ambition to make fame and fortune. He gets the fortune quickly through rogueries in high finance, and a nomination for the governorship of the Empire State seems sure to bring him fame. Fitch has created him so strenuous, rampant, and selfish that he doesn't know he is a scoundrel. He assures the nominating committee that no mudrake could dig up anything to disqualify him for a great public office.

Fitch's other singular creation for this play, Frederick Hancock, doesn't know he is a half-brother to Rand, but is aware that his mother was seduced by Rand's father. Hancock is a moral and physical degenerate, addicted to morphine and living on the price of his silence about the Rand family scandal. He sees in Rand's governorship an opportunity for further blackmail and demands a promise of graft or he will let the skeleton out of the closet. That's the situation at the start of the great middle act. The first and last are not remarkable.

## A Stirring Climax.

Now for the intensity of the action. Hancock nerves himself with a hypodermic injection of morphine for the courage to threaten a politically destructive exposure of Rand's financial crookedness. Rand covers himself before the blackmail. Then Hancock tells him that marriage with his sister will unite their interests. Impossible, says Rand. Quite possible, says Hancock, for they are quite back from a secret ceremony. Stunned by horror, Rand informs him that he has married his own half-sister. Hancock, under the spell of the drug, crazed by the revelation and vaguely vengeful, then kills the girl to save her from hearing the truth.

Now, that makes such a climax that none but a confident dramatist would dare delay the fall of the curtain. Fitch has the girl's dead body carried out, and then, after two or three minutes of relaxed tension, aims for a second and bigger culmination. Hancock begs Rand to let him shoot himself. Rand would rather doom him to the electric chair. A fierce fight for the pistol ensues. Rand gets it.

"Let me die now," says Hancock, "and the scandal won't survive me." That argument counts with the selfish Rand. He hands over the weapon. But his better nature revolts. He will stand the ruin of his prospects and on them build anew. He wrests the pistol away from the trembling wretch and throws it with a crash of glass through a window. That's the climax. Never before had I heard women scream hysterically in a theater. Unaccustomed to tragedy in a modern play, and totally unprepared for it from Fitch, the first audience literally went wild. The author being beyond call, the two actors—Walter Hammond and Tully Marshall—whom he had chosen for their parts, were brought out seventeen times by the prolonged applause.

Original singularity is the object now in much of the American play writing, and New York is being agitated by it in "The Lily" and "The City." Did you observe the old effectuality of "The Lily's" second-act climax when you saw it in Washington? A girl's father, brother and a family friend have sent such a letter to a neighbor, you recall, that if he is the secret and sinful lover of the maiden he will come to their ambush, but if he does not respond, she is inno-

cent. They will know in twenty minutes; and for one of them, that seems like five, they sit in solemn silence; and then the curtain goes down with out a sound.

How much David Belasco has altered the translation of the Wolff-Leroux play in passing it through his adaptive hands I don't know, but he can't have lessened the tenseness of the suspense that holds over from that second act to the third. The girl has falsely asserted her innocence, her sister believes the denial, her father doubts it, her brother thinks the worst, the friend of the family seeks to hide the truth, and the audience knows she is guilty. So the discussion throughout the theater during the recess isn't about the actuality of her sin, but as to what the consequences will be. The girl and her motherly sister are not there when the curtain goes up again; but the three men sit in unchanged attitudes of rigid awe. "It's twenty minutes," says one. "It's twenty-five, and he isn't here," says another. "Thank God, he won't come," says the third. Then the dreaded man walks in. I don't remember a more adroit prolongation of suspense.

Nance O'Neill hits Broadway hard with the elder sister's denunciation of this father as the selfish cause of the girl's error and exposure of free love. In his first-night speech, Belasco hoped that Miss O'Neill wouldn't lose anything by her "personal sacrifice," by which he meant her appearance as a sad-visaged, dead-hearted, life-wrecked old maid. She may modify her make-up, but in the opening performance she overdid it, and looked like a grim, gaunt, half-centenarian. But she most effectively turned a drama of adultery into a play of dignity. In about a hundred lines of fervid eloquence.

## A Society Man's Play.

A woman Don Juan. That's the startling character in the play made from Joseph Medill Patterson's novel, "A Little Brother of the Rich." She belongs to New York society, branded "best," too, and is not dissolute; nor are her manners or tastes ungentle; but she reaches out for men sensually, just as men commonly do for women; and, like them, she takes up her affections only to throw them down when satiated with them. At the outset of the play, she is a Dick's wife, with a Paul for a paramour. Paul calls on her to break off the liaison, because he has engaged to marry a good girl; but Muriel is a sponge; in excess, and before he realizes it, Dick, the husband, catches him in a wicked hug and kiss.

"If I quietly let Muriel get a divorce from me," says Dick, "will you marry her?" "I will," says Paul; for he is exposed as a wife's leader astray, and what other response can a gentleman make? In the next act, we see that two years of wedlock with Paul have tired Muriel of him, and she has acquired a Lassiter for a third side of the marital triangle. This variant in Muriel's adultery has a worthy wife, but is ready to be faithless to her; and this time Muriel is mercenary as well as sensualistic, for she accepts an autocrat with a year's maintenance of his chauffeur and garage in payment for her conduct. Hilda Spang, Muriel's wholesome player of honest good humor, personates Muriel, Vincent Serrano, Henry Mortimer, and John Flood give distinctness to Paul, Lassiter, and Dick. The two triangles are well made by Mr. Patterson and well rendered by the actors.

What comes of it? Well, after the author has exposed what, I like to believe, is a scarce sin—wealthy and modish woman sexually degenerate—he kindly lets the last half of the play go to agreeable consequences—so far at least as Paul, her principal victim, is concerned. The discarded fiancée of Paul is a well-behaved actress, Sylvia, whom Ida Conquest makes an amiable girl, altogether lovely. When the seductive Muriel takes Paul away from her, Sylvia turns heart and soul to acting, goes away to London, and in two years comes back to gain fame in New York. She lovingly forgives the repentant and regenerated Paul, thus bringing "The Little Brother of the Rich"—called that because Paul is a poor grafter on the rich first along—to a happy conclusion.

One-act Horror by Same Author. New Yorkers who like that drama of modish degradation and so desire mere depiction by Mr. Patterson may get it in his short drama of the cocaine habit. "The lack of a horribly exasperated drug fiend in 'Dope,' however, strikes me as Zola's 'Drink' might with the maniac drunkard left out. Especially a vaudeville audience expects a raving victim of cocaine in a strait-jacket at a hospital, wrecking his flat, or maybe killing his wife because she won't give him more of the dope. Instead of that, the traffic in cocaine, rather than the abuse of it, is the theme.

Dean Summer, of the Episcopal Cathedral, is announced here as Patterson's collaborator, and Herman Lieb is the actor who personates the keeper of an East Side drug store where cocaine is sold without physicians' orders. Two pallid, tottering fellows, one a mere boy, come in for the dope, sniff it through their noses into their throats, and immediately are braced up. A slatternly woman carries the stuff away in her shaky hands as though barely able to wait for its exhilaration till out of sight. A girl of the street is turned away because Mr. Robson and Miss Courtney, wealthy amateur missionaries to the slums, have caught Lieb selling cocaine to a child and have telephone to the police for a raid.

Two hundred persons of thoughtful mind were among the 2,000, and that title of the audience seemed satisfied to have the two missionaries serve as deplorable, if not horrible, examples of the cocaine evil. Instead of maddened victims of it. The drugist is popular throughout the entire assemblage from the moment that, refusing the street girl the usual nickel for lack of it, gives her a coin to buy it elsewhere—for she is a credit customer. So there is a roar for him when, taking a package of cocaine from the shelf, he shows that the makers are a firm from which Robson's family draws its wealth. Still noisier is the delight when, after Miss Courtney has denounced him for living on the profits of evil and declaring that she won't keep her engagement to marry him, the drugist informs her that the building containing his store, with its upper stories tenanted by lost girls, is her own family's property. And the outbreak is merry laughter when the amateur missionaries refuse to make a complaint that will expose their income from repulsive vice and send the patrol wagon away empty. So "Dope" is a satire, as well as a moral lesson.

## ENTERTAINMENTS TONIGHT

Lyman H. Howe, with his rare, thrilling, and instructive moving pictures, with accurate sound accompaniments, comprising his New York Hippodrome travel festival, will present at the Columbia Theater to-night on the occasion of the closing of his Washington engagement one of the most interesting of his programmes.

The panoramas unrolled during an automobile trip through Savoy, France, are revealed in a way that is perfection itself in motion photography. The Eastern Gateway—Calcutta—and the Western Bombay—are both shown true to their cosmopolitan city life. So, too, is sacred Benares. This is the city of vast sculptured ruins, of the sacred Ganges of the past, and still of the present, as indicated by multitudes of Hindus worshipping at their shrines. A display of horsemanship by Australians; strange associations and pranks of birds and animals; effects of physical phenomena; a ramble through Naples; busy Sicily; the dangers of steepclimbing in England; the gorgeous fountains of Rome merely hint at the pictorial lore and beauty that Mr. Howe has concentrated into this programme.

## Academy—Concert.

Helmuth and Sondheimer, who made such a hit in their single and double acts at the New Academy concert last Sunday night, have again been secured by the management and will appear to-night in new features. Harry Raymond will also be presented in songs and a monologue full of timely hits and witticisms. As an added attraction to this New Year's bill the management has also secured George Baker, who will be seen in a novelty act out of the ordinary. Motion pictures with varied subjects of wide range will also be shown to give increased variety to the already most attractive programme.

## Auditorium—Moving Pictures.

The moving pictures exhibited at the Masonic Auditorium continue to attract. In a continuous performance of two shows, each lasting one hour and a half, there is an infinite variety in the subjects shown each week. A feature is made of travel pictures, pictorial plays, and comedy subjects. For this week, commencing to-night at 7:30 o'clock, an entire new list of subjects will be projected on the immense screen, with, as usual, added vaudeville acts.

## "PETER."

Remarkable Series of Tests of Monkey's Intelligence. Prof. Lightner Witmer, professor of psychology in the University of Pennsylvania, has published in the Psychological Clinic his observations of "Peter," the monkey with the human brain, at Chase's this week.

The clinical tests with Peter were conducted last October at the University of Pennsylvania, although the professor's study of Peter began in Boston some before that. He is carrying out the study of monkey psychology now with an orangutan, which he and Dr. William H. Furness imported from Borneo for the purpose of making psychological studies. Dr. Witmer says, in his article: "My doubts were bred from knowledge of the difficulty of judging the intelligence of an animal from a stage performance. So-called educated horses and even educated seals and dogs have made their appeal in large numbers to the credulity of the public. Can any animal below a man be educated in the proper sense of the word? Or is the animal mind susceptible of more than a mechanical training, and only given a spurious counterfeits of an educated intelligence when under the direct control of the trainer?"

Since that day I have seen Peter in five public performances, have tested him at psychological clinic and privately on three occasions. I now believe that it is a very real sense, the animal is himself giving the stage performance. He knows what he is doing, he delights in it, he varies it from time to time, he understands the association of tricks which are being called for, he is guided by the word of mouth without any signal, open or concealed, and the function of his trainer is exercised mainly to steady and control.

In riding up an inclined plane and down a small flight of stairs, he allows himself to get very close to the floor, and to save himself, put out one hand and very cleverly pushed himself away, while still retaining his balance. I also saw him ride as close as possible to the side wall of the stage setting and take a very short turn with the evident purpose of seeing whether or not he could do it. From time to time I observed that he made the work more difficult for himself than was needed, seemingly out of mere bravado and in pure enjoyment of the feat.

Dr. Witmer says he hesitated a long time over the advisability of testing Peter's intelligence at the psychological clinic, but that he decided to do so because he had presented a chimpanzee to a clinic devoted to the examination of backward and defective children. Now, however, that Peter has been tested at the clinic, he is willing to assert that it is well-nigh impossible to give an adequate account of the intelligence shown by this ape, who cannot be more than five or six years of age, except in terms of comparison with the abilities and disabilities of the human child.

In the clinic, Peter was put through many tests which are used for backward children. The chimpanzee was able to bring beads the first time he tried it. He put peas in the ordinary kindergarten pegging board, and he used a hammer and screw driver, and distinguished without mistake between screws and nails. A peculiar kind of hammer was given the ape in order to fool him, but Peter was not to be fooled. He felt both ends of the hammer and used the flat end instead of the point in driving home the nails. As an evidence of initiative, Peter, during the tests, darted away to a washstand, turned the water faucet, and himself a drink of water. Peter demonstrated his ability to say "mamma," and in one minute learned to give the sound of "a." One of the most remarkable performances in the clinic was making the letter "a" on a blackboard. In this the ape reproduced a fair copy of the letter.

## Young English Girl an Ingenue.

Jessie Glendinning, the beautiful young English ingenue who plays the part of the drabman's daughter in "The Servant in the House," is a daughter of John Glendinning, the well-known English actor, and a daughter-in-law of Henry Miller. Miss Glendinning is the youngest actress who has played the ingenue role in "The Servant in the House," and, according to the Chicago critics, the best assigned to the part since Henry Miller produced the play in Washington a year ago last March.

## AMUSEMENTS.

New York Ave. and 13th St. MASONIC AUDITORIUM. EVERY EVENING EXCEPT FRIDAY. 7:30 TO 10:30. MOVING PICTURES AND VAUDEVILLE. NOVEL AND UP-TO-DATE PICTURE FILMS. ALL SEATS, 10c.

## STEREOPTICON FOR BOYS

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Programme: Overture, Water Carrier.....Chernobil Symphony, B Minor (unfinished).....Schubert Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 2.....Chopin Tarentelle.....Paganini.....Poppo

Prelude, string orchestra.....Mozart A Day in Naples, Italian Divertissement.....Byrd Prices, \$1.00, 75c, 50c, and 25c. On sale box office, Columbia Theater.

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The New Year bill at the Virginia Theater sets a high pace for the year at this excellent playhouse. The Great Emaline, impersonator, will probably be the headliner. He/she, the gender is not altogether certain, gives representations of the leading American and foreign actors and actresses. The Great Emaline comes to the Virginia with a record of triumphs in houses elsewhere. Chaffant has a number of excellently trained dogs. Evans and Black will show a spectacular musical novelty.

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The moving pictures incident to the performance are shown in lines.

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Seats now on sale at Wilson's Ticket Office in Drexel's Music Store, corner of Thirtieth and G streets. Local management of Mrs. Green.

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Jan. 10. Poles, Domenico, Venturini, Scott.

Tues. Eve.—"THAIS." Miss Mary Garden, Miles Trentini, Duchene; MM.

Jan. 11. Renaud, Delmores, Scott, Nicolay, Venturini.

Wed. Act.—"TRAVIATA." Mmes. Tetrazzini, Egeer, Severina; Mr. McCormack, Sammarco, Domenico, Scott.

Wed. Eve.—"TALES OF HOFFMAN." Mmes. Cavalleri, Trentini, Gentile; Jan. 12. MM. Dalmore, Renaud, Gilbert, Crabbe, Venturini, Foschini.

Thurs. Eve.—"JONGLEUR DE NOTRE DAME." Miss Garden, MM. Dufranne, Huberdeau, Scott, Crabbe.

Fri. Eve.—"Double Bill." "DAUGHTER OF THE REGIMENT." Mmes. Tetrazzini, Duchene, MM. McCormack, Gilbert, Nicolay.

Jan. 14. (Followed by) "PAGLIACCI." Mmes. Walter-Villa; MM. Zorola, Sammarco, Crabbe.

Conductors: MM. Sturali, Nicosia, and Charlier.

Sale of seats for all performances opens to-morrow at Box Office. Prices: Boxes, \$15 and \$50; orchestra, \$5; mezzanine, \$5 and \$4; balcony, \$4 and \$3; second balcony, \$2 and \$1.50.

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